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## Notes: Lutheran Unity: A Larger Ministry, 1948

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Nov. 11, 1948

A Larger Ministry

Banquet - Am. L. C.

Today -  
Nov. 11 -

1. Gratitude - not only for invitation itself - but esp. because of long-awaited opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the many kindnesses I have experienced from members of the A. L. C. - for many years now - at meetings, conferences, seminars, public occasions I have been greeted with a gracious brotherliness which really could not have been anticipated by a visitor from a seemingly far & distant land - for that I have always been most grateful - and I want to say so here and now - ~~Schuchter - first one I met at the Banquet~~
2. A few months ago I first saw an announcement of the theme for this convention and ever since I have been fascinated by its implications for the future of the whole Church in America & the world - "Into" - it reflects, it seems to me, an attitude, a philosophy of history, which we have all too often forgotten in the years of transition & pain for the Church & for the world - i.e. the working of the Spirit of God is always toward the future - there is no room in our life and thought for a Golden Age in the past - for a spiritual primitivism - ever since Protestant the story of the Church has been and must remain the story of a transcean pilgrimage <sup>you can almost</sup> toward the future - the Church and the Church alone is not subject to the laws of history - the principles of change are exhaustion - it moves into tomorrow - and because only God is ever new in tomorrow it moves forward toward God - "Into" - this motto

Y'all guys -  
 Father Day secrets  
 Raymond - ~~Kramer~~ - historic moment -  
 veil of names

1. Priests - informally - discussion this  
 afternoon - marvelous - clear - pointed -  
 - two high points for me -

a) Hitting in rear - got off head  
 when brother from Cal. got  
 up in Mr. Thomas Bell for H.B.C. -  
 me too - advantage just not so

b) Schmitt - great important as the fact of the H.B.C.  
 good father in God - honesty -  
~~Thomas~~ -

c) Tody - under - selective friendship  
 "except ye know" - Chmanan -

d) Homicide Day - background -  
 an old world - a stupid  
 world - moral stupidity -

V-J Day - Nov 11, 1918.

Chapel - mass suicide - how  
 is done - the shadows are long -

the whole judgment of God  
 Scourging through the clouds -  
 time for us to be up & doing -  
 voices at midnight?



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reflects, I believe, the only spirit in which we can face our common tomorrow - the only spirit by which we can hope to rebuild the broken places and the ruined temples in the hearts of men and in the world -

3. My own contribution to an understanding of the dynamic, inspirational quality of your motto can only be small & momentary - I would however, like to say a few words about it in terms of the future of the hith. Church in the world - esp. also in regard to the problem of hith. Unity - in the Church, ~~unholy~~ <sup>unholy</sup> is always a hint from God - tonight we are face to face with such a hint from God - the possibility of removing the walls which still divide us and standing before the world in a unity of mind & heart which would be one of the greatest evidences of the power of the Spirit of God since the Church emerged from the unity of the catacombs & certainly the

making  
aff.

- 11 greatest possible contribution of our generation to a larger ministry for our beloved hith. Church -

4. You will forgive me if for a moment I speak negatively <sup>but honestly I hope</sup> ~~constructively~~ - some of the basic obstacles to hith. Unity in America tonight - they are somewhat difficult to discuss since they often lie deep and hidden in the recesses of our souls - we are often unaware of their presence, determining influence on our thoughts, words & attitudes whenever we approach the problem of true hith. unity -



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5. There is just of all, our organizationalism - difficult to define - certainly it would not be in conformity with the will of God if we were not deeply loyal to our organization, our own synodical affiliation - this loyalty is vitally necessary not only because our Synods have given us much - but also because all of us know well that every synod has its own distinctive and vitally important contribution to make to the great structure of Lutheranism - each one of us has something that all of us ought to have - and the recognition of this fact is certainly, not organizationalism -
6. Organizationalism begins - and is contrary to the divine will for the Church - when we think & act as though our own synod were an end in itself - rather than a means to an end - when secularism enters the Church & we think only in terms of members, power, and wealth - when we forget that all our organizational structure is only the tool given us by the Lord of the Church for the building of the communion of saints, the *Una Sancta*, the Body of Christ in the world - important? yes! but made with hands - to be used for the building of the temple not made with hands - the scaffolding and not the building that <sup>makes</sup> ~~hands~~ earth & heaven

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<sup>unfinished</sup>  
the <sup>- all expression summary</sup> cathedral of the living, acting God.

7. Second obstacle - the dangerous emphasis on the intellectual element in our theology - not anti-intellectual - now, the intellectual is a vital, absolutely necessary element in a good theology - <sup>esp. Luther</sup> in fact, much bad theology is not so much bad faith as bad thinking - in theology the illuminated mind must work on the given-ness of divine fact & idea - but, having agreed on that, who does not recognize the constant danger of reducing the warmth & power, the dynamic indicativeness & imperativeness of the Gospel to the cold, abstract proposition of logic - of explanation & argument - until our heads are full and our hearts are empty - and the living, continuing, personal Christ - our theology must always be an expression of our faith - never of anything else, certainly never of hate or suspicion or fear - it must move in the atmosphere of the Cross - faith wrought by love - so must our theology - the necessary intellectual process by which theology is born, must never raise the intellect into a dominant position - the just shall live by faith - and the theology of the just must also live by faith - the living Spirit of the living God must be just as active in our theology as He is in our faith -



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8. Perhaps all this is merely another way of saying that there must be a unity of hearts before there can be a unity of minds - and that unity is given beyond the reach of our hands - it is in the best place in the world in the hands of God the H.S. - this is just as true of inter-synodical unity as it is of the unity within our own synods. He alone can lead us into all truth - when God places something beyond the power of our minds, He wants us to reach it by prayer - by falling on our knees - for it is always the glory of the spiritual that it can achieve that which is impossible for the natural & intellectual.
9. And so - I venture to plead for an attitude & a spirit which not all of us have yet attained - that we try in our time and our generation to bring all our relationships to the level of heaven, to the test of oneness in Christ - then shall we find that we are able to heal that which is broken, to set at one that which is divided, to restore to ourselves & to others the full consciousness of the Communion of Saints which we have when we all dwell in Christ and He in us.
10. All this makes the problem of both unity & problem of sanctification - as we grow into X we shall grow into one another - and the hour of the open manifestation of the unity of our hearts will come - it will come - and it will not be late.